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Delivered to the

C L E R G Y

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OF THE

ARCHDEACONRY

OF THE

EAST-RIDING of YORK,

At a PRIMARY VISITATION,

Held at *Hunmanby* on the 1st; at *Beverley*  
on the 3d; and at *Kingston* upon *Hull*,  
on the 4th of *June*, 1756.

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By ROBERT OLIVER, M. A.  
• ARCHDEACON.

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L O N D O N:

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MDCC LVI.



TO  
The REVEREND the  
C L E R G Y  
OF THE  
EAST-RIDING of YORK,

GENTLEMEN,

*T*O your Approbation of the following Discourse, when it was delivered to you in your respective Deaneries, you was pleased to add, and to urge, your Request, that it might be made public. The Motive of this Desire was truly commendable, viz. the Hopes of its doing some Good. I own, I cannot help saying, that, for my own Part, the more I consider the Temper and Disposition of the Age we live in, the less Reason there appears, to me at least, for expecting, however ardently we may wish for, this Effect. Be this as it will;



iv DEDICATION.

*will; whether the Event shall turn out agreeable to your honest Hopes, or verify my Suspicion, I nevertheless take the Liberty, in my Turn, to make a Request, which is, that you will please to accept of it, as a public Testimony of that just Esteem, with which*

*I am,*

GENTLEMEN,

*Your very affectionate Brother,*

*And most faithful Servant,*

R. OLIVER.



REVEREND BRETHREN,

**T**HIS being the first Time I have had the Pleasure of meeting you together, something may be expected from me suitable to the Occasion. And although, when I consider the *venerable Body* I am to address, I am sensible, that *Silence* would best become me; yet, as this might receive an unfavorable Construction, I rather chuse to submit to the Candour and Good-nature of my *Brethren*, what I have to say to them, than incur the least Suspicion of *Slight* or *Disrespect*, where *Deference* and *Esteem* are due.

I need not observe to *you*, that frequent Visitations are of great Antiquity and of

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great Use. The Design of them is to enquire into the State of *that Part* of the national Church, that is subject to their Jurisdiction, by whom they are held: And to correct and reform such Abuses, as may *inadvertently* have crept in, or been *designedly* introduced by ill-minded Men, before they grow too strong to be rooted out. They furnish also the *Clergy*, at those Times assembled, with proper Opportunities of conferring together, and concerting the most effectual Methods of improving *christian Knowledge*, and of promoting *christian Practice*, among their respective Flocks; and contributing, as far as *their* Influence extends, to the Preservation of the *best* and *wisest* Constitution in Church and State, at this Day existing in the World. And if ever such united Care was necessary in Support of our *religious* and *civil* Rights, it is certainly so, in this Time of *Danger* to both; to the *one*, from the alarming Growth and Progress of *Infidelity* and *Vice*, the very worst of all *domestic* Foes; and to the *other*, from the Designs and Preparations of a perfidious, powerful, and inveterate *foreign* Enemy.

That

That Infidelity has been long gaining Ground among us, can escape the Notice of *no one*, who is curious enough to observe what daily passeth before his eyes. Properly speaking indeed, Infidelity is a Sin of Speculation; and, would Unbelievers be content to keep it to themselves, the Evil would stop where it began, and the Consequence be *only* their own. But how zealous to vilify Revelation, to disseminate their Tenets, and to make Profelytes? That *this*, and not the Discovery and Advancement of *Truth* and *Virtue*, is their ruling Passion, appears evident from their Method of managing the Controversy themselves have raised. Fair Disputants will give each Argument its full Weight, and treat every Subject in a Manner suitable to its Importance. Be Revelation, then, allowed *probable* only, and *this* many of our Unbelievers seem willing to allow; — They, whose *Profession* is a Regard for natural Religion, should, one would think, argue upon revealed with Decency and Temper, with Equity and Candour, consistent with such *Profession*, at least. And yet, what a *different* Spirit do these its Ad-



versaries every where breathe ! What a *different* Behaviour do they every where observe ! All Artifices, however mean and ungenerous, are used ; all Shapes put on, to shake the Authority, and to weaken the Influence of Revelation. Sometimes it is treated with all the Civility and Good-nature of *seemingly* undisguised Friendship ; at other Times, and by the *very same* Persons, with all the Rancour and Rudeness of open Enmity. Their Language is often extreamly unbecoming *Gentlemen*, and their Arguments far below what might reasonably be looked for from *those*, who are ambitious of shining in the World, as Men of *refined* Taste, of *superior* Understanding, and the *great Masters* of Reasoning.

Facts recorded in the sacred Writings are *partially* represented, or else, and that not seldom neither, notoriously *misrepresented* ;— some Texts are wrested out of their *genuine* Meaning, or violently torn asunder from their *natural* Connexion with other Texts, which, if considered together, would clear up every Difficulty, answer every Objection, and entirely defeat the Purpose of Infidelity ;

— Ad-

— Advantage shall be taken from an erroneous or injudicious Translation of some others, and the Original, unexamined, and not suffered to speak for itself, made answerable for all the Absurdities, which the most sharp-sighted and determined Malice can find, or pretends it hath found, in such Translation; — A few Passages, which, for Want of proper Lights long since irrecoverably lost, are now become obscure, are urged as a Proof of the Obscurity of the whole (*a*); — Sometimes *human Reason* is exalted to the highest Heavens, and appealed to as supreme Judge in Matters which are out of her Jurisdiction to determine any Thing about (*b*); — And then again, when she is called upon to decide in Points manifestly within her

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(*a*) Instances of *Misrepresentation, Perversion and Abuse* of Scripture, with Design to hurt Revelation, may be found in great Abundance, scattered up and down in almost every *deistical Writer*; particularly, Christianity as old as the Creation; Christianity not founded on Argument; The moral Philosopher; Mr. *Chubb's* posthumous Works, and Lord *Bolingbroke*.

(*b*) The Sufficiency of *human Reason* to answer all the Ends of Revelation, and therefore that Revelation was needless, is the Foundation of Deism. See Christianity as old as the Creation, and Oracles of Reason.

Province, we see her degraded from her *high Rank*, and pronounced good for Nothing (*c*); — To believe in the Lump, without enquiring *what* or *why*, is made the distinguishing Character of a true Christian (*d*); implying, that Christianity will not stand the Test of a rational Enquiry; — And then again, we are to believe Nothing, but what we see with our own Eyes (*e*): This, in order to discredit the Scripture-Miracles; though supported by the *best* Evidence a Matter of Fact is capable of, and such as would, without any Difficulty at all, be admitted, even by these Objectors themselves, in any other Case than that of Religion. — If we alledge the Silence of the early Enemies of Christianity, as a good *negative* Argument for them; then, it seems, many Books, written against Christianity in the first Ages of it, were *probably* suppressed by the Christians; — If we refer to Passages that are come down to us, bearing Testimony

(*c*) Christianity not founded on Argument.

(*d*) Christianity not founded on Argument. Mr. Hume's Philosophical Essays.

(*e*) Christianity not founded on Argument.



ny to these Miracles, and plead such Passages as a good *positive* Argument in their Favour; then truly, those Passages were forged by christian Writers; — If we exclaim against this, as not *reasoning*, but Perverseness and Cavilling, and a shameful begging of the Question; it is then roundly asserted, that every Miracle is an *Absurdity to common Sense and Understanding, contrary to all the Attributes of God (f)*, and not to be established on any Evidence whatever (*g*); — when the *swift and wonderful* Progress, Christianity made in the World, is insisted upon, as an Evidence of *divine* Power accompanying it; Mahometanism is immediately called in to invalidate this Plea: Though no two Things in Nature can be more unlike each other, than the Methods by which the Religion of *Christ*, and the Imposture of Mahomet, was propagated in the World.

Such are the Artifices, such is the Dis-  
ingenuity of our Unbelievers. And who-

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ever

(f) The Resurrection of Jesus considered.

(g) The Resurrection of Jesus considered, and Mr. Hume,

ever has the least Acquaintance with them, or their Books, will find they are not here injured. He will find, that what is here said, falls greatly short of what justly may be said. I purposely draw a Veil over the profane Drollery, the low Ridicule, and scurrilous Invectives, with which their most celebrated Performances abound, against the Instruments, by which it pleased God, in the several Ages of the World, to convey his Will to Mankind, from *Moses* down to *St. Paul*; not sparing even the most *irreproachable, innocent, most beneficent* Person, that ever lived upon Earth, *Jesus Christ* himself. It must give Pain to every one, who has the least Tincture of Seriousness or Goodness, to read, or to hear the most interesting Subject that can possibly bespeak the Attention, or enter into the Debates of *reasonable* and civilized Creatures, treated with so little Reason, and so little good Manners. And that the *Christian Revelation* hath met with this Usage from those, who have assumed the Name of *Deists*, stronger Proof needs not be required, stronger Proof cannot be had, than what is to be had from their *own* Writings.

Man

Man is a Creature made for Religion; and *some* Religion he *will* have. Those, of whom we are now speaking, declare for that of Nature. Is it *this*, then, which they would have in the Room of Revelation? Charity, *Christian* Charity, can hardly entertain so favorable an Opinion of them. For, besides their not agreeing among themselves, wherein natural Religion consists, nor what Duties arise from it, they betray such Principles, as would, if pursued to their *just* and *natural* Conclusions, dig it up from the very Foundation.

The Existence and Providence of *one* infinite, *eternal*, and *all-perfect* Being, the *Maker* and *Governor* of the World; — The *essential Difference* of *Good* and *Evil* in human Actions; — The Immortality of the Soul of Man; — and, a *future State* of Rewards and Punishments, are Articles, which all Ages have looked upon, as the *Pillars* of natural Religion. And, in Truth, it will be impossible to find any other, on which it can safely rise, and securely stand. But are the *Deists* agreed among themselves? Is  
any



any *one* of them fully agreed with even himself on *all* these Articles? I will not say, that any of them have, in *express Terms*, denied a God; but a Denial of his Providence, which some of them are justly chargeable with (*b*), is, with Regard to Man, a Denial of his *very* Existence. For, if the supreme Being is indifferent to all we think, or say, or do—If neither the most *virtuous* Life can recommend us to his *Favour*, nor the most vicious expose us to his Displeasure — If we have *nothing* to hope or to fear; nothing to receive or to suffer from him, either in *this*, or in any *future* State of Existence, but are to be both wholly disregarded at *present*, and totally extinct *after Death*, with Respect to Us, he is No God. Our natural Idea of God is, not barely that he is our Maker; but that he is our Preserver and Benefactor, our Father, and our Governor, the Witness and Judge of all our *Thoughts*, *Words*, and *Actions*; and, that he hath Rewards and Punishments to dispense, and that he *certainly* will dispense them to us according

(*b*) Mr. *Cubbs*'s Posthumous Works. Lord *Bolingbroke*, *passim*; as to a particular Providence.

ing to our Behaviour. And from *this* Notion of a *Deity*, arise naturally, on our Part, the Duties of *Love* and *Fear*, of *Gratitude*, *Dependence*, and *Resignation*; of *Prayer*, *Praise*, and *Thanksgiving*, and every Act of *rational* Obedience.

With Regard to the Immortality of the Soul of Man, and a State of Retribution reserved for him after *this* Life; some speak of them with *great Doubt* and *Uncertainty*, but seemingly more inclinable to reject, than to admit them (*i*): Or else, confine them to one particular Part of our Species only, to those, namely, who have acted in *public* Characters, and *high* Stations during Life. (*k*) Others, indeed, make favorable mention of these Articles; but then it is, as of an *human Invention* (*l*) only, to keep men in *good Order*, and *peaceable Submission* to Government. Out of their *own* Mouths, therefore, these forward Teachers of others; for why so weak, or so wicked, as to *labour* to bring into *Discredit*, and to *subvert* an Opinion,

(*i*) Mr. *Hobbes*. Mr. *Chubb*. Lord *Bolingbroke*. (*k*)  
Mr. *Chubb*. (*l*) Free-Thinker. Lord *Bolingbroke*.

Opinion, by *their own* Confession, so instrumental to public Happiness?

That there is in human Actions, a Difference founded in *Nature*, antecedent to, and independent upon *human* Authority, is willingly allowed by some of the *Deists* themselves. And yet by others all Distinction of this kind is resolved into the *Will* and *Command* of the Magistrate (*m*). Every Action, antecedently to *civil Laws*, is asserted to be in its own Nature *indifferent*; nor is Religion itself allowed any other Foundation, than the *Sovereign's* Authority (*n*). Upon this Principle, should the Sovereign command *Idolatry*, these warm Advocates for natural Religion must turn *Idolaters*: A Change, which, no doubt, would sit easy enough on such as can advance, that “Polytheism is more conformable to the  
“ natural Conceptions of the human Mind,  
“ than the Belief of one first intelligent  
“ Cause, the sole Creator, Preserver, and  
“ Governor of all Things (*o*):” As well

as

(*m*) Mr. *Hobbes*.(*n*) Lord *Shaftesbury*.(*o*) Lord *Bolingbroke*.



as on such Latitudinarians, who can make a Jest of those, who have chosen rather to suffer Persecution and Death, than make *Shipwreck of the Faith and a pure Conscience.*

Thus, out of *pure Zeal* against Revelation, have the *Deists* betrayed the Cause they undertook to plead; and whilst they laboured to destroy the *System* they declared themselves against, they have mortally wounded *that*, in whose Defence they engaged. Now, whence this extraordinary Conduct, this strange Inconsistency? Why, if Christians will so far oblige them, as to part with *revealed*, they will return the Compliment, and as courteously give up *natural* Religion, and so by this happy Compromise put an End to all Disputes at once, and amicably agree to have *no Religion* at all.

When Unbelievers run these extravagant Lengths, and, instead of enjoying their notions in private, are uncommonly industrious in spreading them abroad, their Infidelity is *no longer* a Sin of *Speculation*, it becomes

comes an *Overt* Act, and its Effects are amazingly dreadful. For, from whence; but from this poisonous Spring have issued out those Torrents of Vice, those *Overflowings* of *Ungodliness*, which every *good* Man in secret mourns for, and whereof every *thinking* Man trembles for the Consequences.

To enumerate the reigning Vices of the Age, which are the genuine Issue of Infidelity, would be extremely painful. It is of more Moment to endeavour to reclaim the *present*, and to preserve from Infection the *rising* Generation. This is the Duty of every *Christian*; of those more especially, who are appointed the public Instructors of the People. But how great the Disadvantages, which *our* Order, *my Brethren*, lies under. All Methods, however ungenerous and unfair, are used, to prevent any good we might do of this kind. We are represented, as having, either too little Sagacity to discover the Truth ourselves, or too little Honesty to communicate it. No Names are thought too abusive, or contemptuous for us. What Impression, then, can we expect,

expect, or hope to make on Men, already prejudiced against us, as Fools or Knaves? But why this Treatment? Our Education is as *liberal* and *genteel*, and, for any thing that appears to the contrary, our *natural* Understanding as *good*, and our Improvements of it as *great*, and our common Dealings in the World as *fair* and *upright*, as the *perdest* and most *boastful* Declaimers against us can *modestly* pretend to. Thus much may be said, I conceive, with strict Truth; and, I hope, without Vanity. Why then are we traduced, as so *greatly* their Inferiors in Wisdom and Virtue, as not to be allowed common Honesty, and hardly common Sense? We are far from presuming ourselves impeccable, or infallible. We have our Errors, and our Failings, in *common with* other Men; but surely not greater, or more dangerous. Why then are we tried at *different* Bars? Why is every *Mote* in a Clergyman's Eye decreed to be a *Beam*; and, every *Beam* in another's Eye pronounced a *Mote*? Why must *criminal* Indulgences in the *one* pass *unnoticed*, at least, *uncensured*, perhaps *applauded*; and the least Slip in the *other* be denied the com-



common Allowance of human Infirmary? Why the Immorality of a few *Individuals* amongst us, which the rest lament, and no less than the most censorious of our Adversaries, condemn, be charged to the Account of the *whole Body*, as if there was not one sound Member in it, *no not one*? The Reason is — Their Profession. They are Ministers of *Christ*; — They preach *his* Gospel; — They teach their People, that they are all by *Nature*, Children of *Wrath*; and that, although they are by *Baptism* made Children of *Grace*; yet, if they would be admitted into eternal Glory, they must believe in *Christ*; — rely upon his Satisfaction for the *Pardon* of their Sins, but at the same time repent of, and forsake them; and, to the utmost of their Power, practise all those Virtues he hath prescribed us in his Gospel. Abstracted from this Consideration, *viz.* our *ministerial Function*, and the Doctrines we preach, which a *Deist* can never digest, we should share in the common Esteem and Civility of other Men. But from hence, from hence *alone*, arise that Obloquy and Contempt, which the  
Preachers

Preachers of Christianity, in this *Protestant-Christian Country only*, meet with.

These are, it must be owned, my *Brethren*, great *Difficulties* to encounter in the Course of our Ministry: But they must not be *Discouragements*. The more we are reviled for our *Work's Sake*, the more zealous should we be in carrying it on. As the Adversaries of our most holy Religion encrease their *Attacks*, we ought to redouble our *Diligence*, and be ever on our Guard to secure our People from even the most distant Approaches of *Infidelity* and *Profaneness*, to make a Breach either in their *Faith* or *Practice*. Our Studies should be particularly bent to acquire a right Understanding of the holy Scriptures, that we may be able to obviate the *Cavils* of Unbelievers, and prevent the Advantages they are, on all Occasions, ready to take, from Texts *wrongly* or *injudiciously* translated. In treating some Articles *peculiar* to Christianity, great Caution is necessary. Those, that are strictly *mysterious*, we must be content to leave so. To explain them is neither our *Duty*, nor in our *Power*. To attempt

it is *imprudent*, if not presumptuous. It is making Sport for *Infidels*, and putting Weapons into the Hands of these *Enemies* of Christianity, which they are but too strongly inclined to make use of against it, and which they do, but too often, use with an *unhappy* Success in perverting others to Infidelity. This, however, we may do, and this is all we can do; we may take off the Force of Unbelievers' Objections and clear the christian *Mysteries* from the Contradictions they unjustly charge them with. Beyond this is not safe, and may involve us in more and greater Difficulties, than we endeavour by our Explanations to avoid. I need not observe, in an Audience of Divines, how far this hath been the Case in practising upon the Doctrines of the *Trinity* — the Union of the *two Natures* in Christ — the *Fore-knowledge* of God, and the *Free-agency* of Man, and some others; nor what Mischief hath been thereby unhappily, though undesignedly, done. For there are too many in the World, who will never be persuaded to believe *that possible* to be true, which it is *impossible* for Man to explain; and therefore, though very wrongly, conclude, that it could not possibly



bly be revealed from God. This again leads weak and ill-minded Men to another unhappy Conclusion, namely, that if the Mysteries of the Gospel are not revealed from God, so neither is the Morality of it; and therefore, that they are at liberty to neglect this, as well as to disbelieve the other. So dangerous may it sometimes be, when Men, even great, and good, and well-meaning Men, would be *wise above what is written*.

In our public Instructions, we must recommend and inculcate Virtue and Holiness in the *Purity and Simplicity* of the Gospel, borrow our Motives and Arguments from that *Word* of God, and from the same Fountain of divine Wisdom draw our Proofs. As we profess ourselves *christian* Preachers, our Duty is to preach up *Christianity*. This if we do, we may reasonably hope for his Blessing on our Labours, who hath promised to be *with us alway even unto the End of the World\**. The *eternal and unchangeable Reason and Fitness* of Things; — the *natural Rectitude of Virtue*, and *Obliquity of Vice*; — *Beauty and Order*;

\* Matthew xxviii. 20.

*Harmony* and *moral Sense*, and the like, may, occasionally, have their Use; but in common Congregations, although composed of Men of good common Understanding, they are utterly unintelligible. *Such* Language may, perhaps, engage *such* Hearers in great Admiration of the Preacher's profound Learning, but will make them neither *wiser* nor *better* than they were. Sound, *practical* Doctrine delivered in a plain, unaffected Manner, and in easy and familiar, not *low* and *vulgar* Terms, will have its Weight. It will sink into the Heart, and direct its Motions. But to discourse to an *unlearned* Audience, in a Stile scarcely understood by the *Learned themselves*, is, to say no worse of it, *improper*.

Our Views are not to be confined to the *present*, but we must so labour in the Word and Doctrine\*, as to give *future* Generations Cause to bless God for the Fruits of our Ministry. If we cannot imprint a just Sense of *Duty* on *those*, who are already grown callous in Ignorance, and quite hardened in Vice; we may, at least, by *catechising* and *private* Instructions, lay so deep and solid a Foundation

\* 1 Tim. v. 17.

tion of *useful* Knowledge and *substantial* Piety, in the *younger* Part of our Flocks, as will afterwards, through the Blessing of God, with due Care and proper Cultivation, secure the *next* Age from that spiritual blindness, which is the chief Root of that *Infidelity* and *Irreligion*, that *Enthusiasm* and *Superstition*, that are the Shame of *this*.

But here give me leave to add, that our best Instructions, and most pressing Exhortations, will produce but very little Fruit, without a *corresponding* Life and Conversation. Licentiousness is a bad Character in any Man. In a Minister of the Gospel of Christ, it is extremely dangerous. It closes the Hearts of his Hearers against every good Impression, and renders his warmest Expostulations and soundest Reasonings of little Use. Whereas, on the other Hand, a moderate Share of Learning, joined with *Prudence* and *Sobriety*, with a *benevolent* Disposition, and *affable* Behaviour, an *undesigned* Humility and *undissembled* Sanctity of Manners, scarce ever fails opening their Eyes to



a Sight of their Duty, and, at the same Time, convinces them that it is practicable. Example is the most powerful and persuasive *Preaching*, and speaks to the *Senses*, as well as to the Reason of Men, with an Eloquence almost irresistible.

It is true, indeed, although we could unite in ourselves the *Innocence* of the *Dove*, and the *Wisdom* of the *Serpent*; yet we should find them both too weak to shelter us from the Darts of Calumny and Detraction. Malice has a Thousand piercing Eyes perpetually prying into every Part of our Lives; and the least Blemish discovered she opens a thousand Mouths to publish, with *Additions* and *Aggravations*, to the World. But if we cannot entirely escape Reproach and Contempt, be it, however, our Care to deserve them as little as possible;— to *take heed unto ourselves, and to the Doctrine\** we preach;— to *abstain*, in every Instance of our Conduct, *from all Appearance of Evil* †;— and, whatever we suffer, *not to suffer as Evil-doers* ‡. By this Means, we shall

\* 1 Tim. iv. 16.

† 1 Theff. v. 22:

‡ 1 Pet. iv. 15.

shall not be condemned of our own Conscience. And *if our Heart condemn us not, then have we Confidence towards God\**, that, when summoned to a more righteous Judgment than that of Man, we shall *not be condemned of Him*; but may entertain a well-grounded Hope of being approved by our great Master himself, and received into those *everlasting Habitations*, where no evil Tongue, or Hand of Violence, will be suffered to enter.

One Thing more I shall take the Liberty to mention at this Time; and indeed, not to do it, would be, in our *present* Circumstances, *scarcely* pardonable. It is, that we take all the Care we can to make our People *good Subjects*, as well as good Christians—to give them a due Sense of, and a just Value for our Constitution in *Church and State*, and encourage them, by every tie of *Duty*, by every Motive of *Interest*, to exert the utmost of their Power in Support of it. And herein, I am confident, we shall meet with no great Difficulty with any, who can

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\* 1 John iii. 21.

be brought to consider the *Excellency* of it, and to see how inseparably their own *Safety* and *Happiness* are connected with it. As the *Spartan* antiently was, so now the *English* Government is a Government by Law. The Commands of Men, farther than they are supported by the Authority of Law, need not; if contrary to Law, must not be obeyed. It is a Constitution, in its own Nature the most durable, as well as the most conducive of any, that can be thought of, to the *true Greatness* of the Prince, the *Liberty* of the Subject, and the *Happiness* of *both*. Their respective Rights are so wisely adjusted, and so strongly secured; and the Power of Government so equitably divided between them, that an Alteration would be for the *real* Interest of neither. To attempt therefore to extend the Power of either, at the Expence of the other, would be, to speak of it in the most favorable Terms, *mistaken Loyalty*, or, *mistaken Patriotism*.

Truth and Justice are the Foundation of our Laws: and the End and Design of them is the Protection of our *civil* and *religious*



gious Rights, of our *Persons* and our *Properties*. The Execution of these Laws, at present, is, *and may it long continue*, in the Hands of a *Prince* of *acknowledged Merit*, and of Integrity unblemished. A Prince, who reigns by them, who makes them the *sole* Rule of his Government; and who has always tempered the Rigour of them with Mercy, as far, even to Extremity, as was consistent with the *Dignity* of his Crown, and his own and his People's *Safety*. And of whom it may, with the strictest Truth, be said, that, in the Course of a much longer Reign, than most of his Predecessors enjoyed, he has never been *once* known to make the least *Invasion* on the Laws, or the least *Encroachment* on the Rights and Liberties of his Subjects, or to act unworthy the Majesty of a *British* King, and the Sovereign of a free People.

In Defence of *such* a Constitution, and *such* a King, who would hesitate *one single* Moment to appear? Especially at this Time of Danger, when we are engaged in a just and necessary War against a powerful, subtle, and aspiring Enemy. For, who can  
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be ignorant, that *France* has been long labouring, by *open Violence*, and *secret Machinations*, to ruin the *Commerce*—to crush the *Power*—to overturn the *Protestant Succession*—and to destroy the Constitution, the *envied Constitution of England*? How deeply therefore does it concern *all of us*, as we are *Englishmen*, and as we are *Protestants*, in Point of *Interest* and *Duty* to ourselves, and to our *latest Posterity*, in our *several Stations*, and to the *utmost* of our *Abilities*, to strengthen his Majesty to defeat the unrighteous Design; and to keep off from our Necks that intolerable Yoke, that Yoke of *worse than Egyptian* Servitude, of *Servitude* both of *Mind* and *Body*, which *France* and *Rome* would rejoice to fasten on.

If any are discovered, in this Time of *extreme Danger*, when the closest *Union* among ourselves is *absolutely* necessary for our Preservation, endeavouring to weaken our *Sovereign's* Hands, by scattering the Seeds of *Division* and *Disloyalty*, *groundless Jealousies*, and *causeless Fears*, invidiously detracting from every prudent Step of his Administration, and, at the same Time, maliciously  
 swelling

swelling every *Error* into a *Grievance*, and blowing up every *Miscarriage* into Matter of *Discontent*: Such disaffected Spirits may be told, that, if *Passion* has not totally blinded their *Reason*, or *Prejudice* quite extinguished in them the *Light* of *Common-Sense*, they must see, that *Errors* and *Miscarriages* are incident to Governments, as well as to other Things — that *Perfection* belongs not to *human Institutions*, nor *Infallibility* to *human Counsels*. The loudest in clamouring are generally found among those, who have the *least equitable* Pretensions of any to Clamour. They find themselves *unequal* to the Burden of governing a *small Family*, and yet will undertake to persuade others, with *Noise* and *Confidence* enough indeed, that nothing in the World is easier, than to govern the *most extensive Empire* of the freest People, (I wish there was less Reason, than there seems to be, to add, *free* even to *Licentiousness*) that now is, or perhaps, ever was upon the Face of the whole Earth.

What is now said, is by *no Means* intended to censure, or even to discourage, well-grounded and necessary Complaints of real  
Grievances;



*Grievances*; nor to vindicate, or so much as to palliate *wilful Misconduct*, or *corrupt Measures*, for such are, on *no Terms whatever*, justifiable. If any Man, or Set of Men, should be ever found to sacrifice *public Good* to the sordid Consideration of *private Interest*—to *betray* or to *abuse* the Trust reposed in them by their *King* and *Country*—and to prostitute the Honour of the *Crown*, and the Happiness of the *People*, to ambitious Views of *their own*; as their Crimes are of the *blackest* and most *flagitious* Nature, because *present* and *future irretrievable* Misery may be the Consequence of them; so they will be sure to become the just Object of universal Infamy and Detestation. The heaviest Infliction of *public Justice* is their due; and *this* every good and honest Man, every undissembling Friend to his *King*, and Well-wisher to the *Liberty* and *Prosperity* of his Country, will most heartily wish them. All, therefore, that is here meant, is, that we keep our *Murmurs* and *Complaints* within *proper* Bounds, reserve them for *just* and *necessary* Occasions, and for *just* and *necessary* Occasions *only*, and not censoriously carp at, or busily calumniate

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an Administration for what is *not to be avoided*, viz. such *Errors* and *Miscarriages* in Government, which it is subject to from, what may be called, its *natural Infirmities*. For such there always *have been*, and, as long as Governors are *Men*, and *Men* are *frail* and *fallible Creatures*, such there always *will be*. Perfection is not the Character of any earthly Government; it therefore becomes us, in Point of Gratitude, to thank God, for our Happiness of living under one, that draws the nearest to *Perfection* of any yet known; and, contentedly to acquiesce in what *must be*, in Point of both Interest and Prudence. For *Uneasiness* and *Dissatisfaction*, and crying out, at every Turn, against our *Rulers*, can only serve to disquiet, to disunite, to weaken ourselves, and to render us an *easier Prey* to an Enemy, who watches every Advantage against us; who but too well knows, as we have often experienced, how to avail himself of our *Divisions*, and to gain by our *Follies*, what his own Arms have been unable to procure him.

But

But I need not expatiate on a Subject of this Nature to a Body of Clergy entirely well-affected to his *Majesty's Person* and *Government*. For this is the *Character*, which, with the greatest Pleasure, I have heard of you, *my Brethren*; and the *Propriety* of it has been, on all proper Occasions, justified by *your Conduct*. And therefore, whilst I am delivering *my own*, I am, at the same Time, speaking *your Sentiments*. Nor, indeed, is any Thing, that has been now said, so much intended for a *Charge of Information* and *Direction* to my learned Brethren, from any of whom I am much better disposed to receive *Instructions*, than able to give them, as to acquit myself to my *own Conscience*, in discharging the Duty I owe to the *purest established Church*, to the *wisest civil Constitution* upon Earth; and to that good and excellent Prince, who, under God, is, in the truest and fullest manner, the *Defender* of both. A Prince, whose *universally-allowed Sweetness* of Temper—whose *just and mild Administration*—whose *paternal Care*, and *unwearied Pains* for the *public Good*—whose *religious Observance* of the *Laws*—and whose *steady and prudent*

Zeal



Zeal for the *Protestant* Religion, and the *established Church* of *England*, most deservedly entitle him to the warmest *Gratitude*,—to an *unreserved Affection*,—to the most dutiful *Submission* and *Obedience*, from every *Friend* of *Truth* and *Liberty*. A PRINCE, in one Word, in whom we have *nothing* to regret, but his *Mortality*; *nothing* to fear, but that Day, which, in *Mercy* to this Church and Nation, may God retard many Years yet! when he shall be called upon to resign the troublesome Crown he now wears, for one better proportioned to his *consummate* Virtues.

F I N I S.

By the same AUTHOR.

I. **S**UBJECTION to the present Government, A DUTY. A Sermon preached at *PRESTON* in *Lancashire*, on *Wednesday* the 11th of *June*, 1746, being the Anniversary of his Majesty's happy Accession to the Throne.

Preached and published by particular Desire.

II. *The general Obligation of a peaceable and quiet Submission to Government; together with the particular one, which we of this Nation are under to this DUTY, from the EXCELLENCE of our own.* An Affize Sermon preached at *LANCASTER*, *March* 21, 1748-9. Published at the Request of the High Sheriff, and Gentlemen of the Grand Jury.

